

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 SSM-03 ACDA-07 /091 W
-----011248Z 021717 /44

R 011158Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6429
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 6904
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USINT BAGHDAD
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN FRG
USMISSION USUN NY

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, LE, IZ, XA, PFOR
SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIALS COMMENTS TO VISITING DEPARTMENT OFFICER

1. VISITING LEBANON COUNTRY OFFICER NAT HOWELL MET
MAY 31 WITH A NUMBER OF MFA OFFICIALS WHO MADE, INTER
ALIA, THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

2. THE DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
AFFAIRS (VERED) SAID THAT IN SOME CASES ISRAEL'S "RELATIONS"
WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD ACTUALLY IMPROVED SINCE THE
1973 WAR. SHE MENTIONED BY NAME NIGERIA, THE IVORY COAST,
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AND KENYA, AND NOTED THAT IN CERTAIN INSTANCES COMMERCIAL
RELATIONS HAD INCREASED IN THE ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC
TIES. THIS WAS PARTIALLY EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT
ISRAELI COMPANIES IN AFRICA HAD TO BE MORE CAREFUL
IN FULFILLING THEIR CONTRACTS IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY
ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC MISSION WHICH OTHERWISE MIGHT
HELP BAIL THEM OUT.

3. VERED NOTED THE CONTINUING LOW LEVEL OF DISTURBANCES IN SOUTH LEBANON, CITING PALESTINIAN SHELLING OF CHRISTIAN VILLAGES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MARJAYOUN WATER SUPPLY. THEY ARE TRYING TO WEAR THE CHRISTIANS DOWN, SHE SAID. ASKED HER OPINION UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES SERIOUS PROBLEMS MIGHT AGAIN OCCUR IN SOUTH LEBANON, SHE RESPONDED, "IF THE PALESTINAINS GET THE GREEN LIGHT FROM SYRIA." SHE REITERATED HER CONVICTION THAT IN THE LONG TERM THE IDEA OF A GREATER SYRIA WILL CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE SYRAIN POLICIES IN LEBANON. VERED'S DEPUTY (YEHEZKEL BARNEA) ADDED THAT IT WAS SYRIA WHICH PUSHED LEBANON IN THE 1968-1969 PERIOD INTO SIGNING THE CAIRO ACCORDS AND PERMITTING PALESTINIAN ACTIVITY IN THE ARQUB. BARNEA FOUND IT IRONIC THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE MORE RECENTLY PRETENDED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THEM TO EXTEND THEIR CONTROL OVER SOUTH LEBANON.

4. THE DIRECTOR OF THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION (MOSHE RAVIV) EXPECTED A NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED IN TWO TO FOUR WEEKS. IT WOULD THEN ANNOUNCE ITS OWN POLICIES. RAVIV HAD NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD IN PARTICULAR RETAIN THE POLICIES OF THE PRESENT ONE REGARDING LEBANON, THE U.S., THE PRIORITY OF AVOIDING A NEW WAR, AND THE CONTINUED MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE.

5. THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH
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AND POLICY PLANNING (YOSEF HADDASS) ANTICIPATED THAT IRAQ MAY BE IN FOR A PERIOD OF INSTABILITY WITHIN THE COMING MONTHS. THE COINCIDENCE OF PRESIDENT BAKR'S FATAL ILLNESS AND SADDAM HUSSEIN'S POOR HEALTH COULD LEAD TO THE ARMY SEIZING POWER. ALTERNATIVELY, HUSSEIN COULD RETAIN CONTROL SHOULD HIS HEALTH HOLD UP UNTIL AFTER BAKR PASSES FROM THE SCENE.

6. COMMENT: IN LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS ON LEBANON, HTE ISRAELI OFFICIALS BROKE NO NEW GROUND. THEY SEEMED TO APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH AN EXPERT ON LEBANON, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY TO WHAT EXTENT HOWELL WAS ABLE TO QUALIFY THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE SYRIAN ROLE IN THAT COUNTRY.
LEWIS

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